

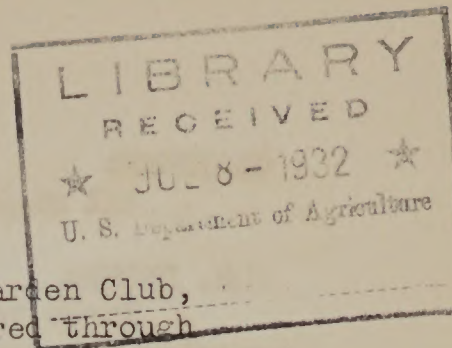
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MEETING - PROGRESSIVE GARDEN CLUB



A radio discussion by members of the Progressive Garden Club, W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, presiding, delivered through WRC and 47 other radio stations, associated with the National Broadcasting Company, Tuesday, May 24, 1932.

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ANNOUNCER:

This being the fourth Tuesday of the month, the Progressive Garden Club is holding its regular meeting and spring flower show today. The members of the Club have assembled in their meeting room and the Chairman is about to call the meeting to order. Just a moment and we will switch you to the room where the meeting is to be held.

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CHAIRMAN:

Now, if you folks have finished arranging your flowers will you please be seated so that we can get our meeting started.

BETTY BROWN:

I'd like to sit right here at the table where I can be near all of these lovely flowers.

CHAIRMAN:

All right, Betty, bring your chair right up to the table. Suppose all of you who have brought flowers for our display today, come and sit around the table, because we want you to tell us about them. We are sorry that more of the club members could not be here to see our beautiful flowers.

AUNT POLLY:

Who brought those lovely peonies?

CHAIRMAN:

Why, Aunt Polly, those are Mrs. Brown's peonies.

AUNT POLLY:

They called them "PINIES" when I was a girl.

CHAIRMAN:

Yes, Aunt Polly, but things have changed somewhat since you and I were youngsters, but they're just as pretty whether you call them pinies or peonies. Mrs. Brown, come up here and tell us how you grow such beautiful peonies.

MRS. BROWN:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I will have to go back about three years if I tell the whole story, but perhaps I can make it brief.



CHAIRMAN:

All right, Mrs. Brown, we're listening.-----

MRS. BROWN:

Three years ago this spring, I heard a dentist who had grown peonies for years, and who was very successful with his peonies, give a talk on how to grow them. Among other things, he said that peonies would grow almost everywhere, that they thrive best in full sunshine, but that certain of the more delicately-tinted varieties may be planted in partial shade to prevent the fading of their color. He said that the safest time to plant is from September 1st until cold weather. He recommended digging holes eighteen inches deep and refilling them with good soil and mixing one-half pint of bone meal with the soil as it is refilled into each hole, then when you plant your root divisions, you should cover them so that the buds or eyes on the roots will be exactly TWO inches below the ground. This man said that most of the failures in growing peonies are due to covering the roots too deeply in planting.

CHAIRMAN:

Judging from the flowers you brought to the meeting today, Mrs. Brown, you followed this man's advice.

MRS. BROWN:

Indeed I did. That very summer I got the catalog of a peony grower and ordered roots of five varieties to be delivered in September. About the middle of September, I received a notice that the roots would be shipped the following week, and Mr. Brown helped me prepare the holes in which to plant them. When the roots came they were about six inches in length, and each one had two or perhaps three buds. I divided some of the stronger ones and made one-bud roots of them. When it came to planting them, we didn't guess at the depth that we covered them, but we measured the depth with a rule.

CHAIRMAN:

Do you give your peonies any special fertilizer treatment, Mrs. Brown?

MRS. BROWN:

Yes, bone meal is the only fertilizer I use. Every spring and every fall, I sprinkle a large handful of bone meal around each plant, but am careful that none of the fertilizer comes in direct contact with the tender stems or the roots. During the first winter, I mulched my peonies with coarse straw, but I didn't put any of the mulch directly over the crowns for fear of rotting them. During the drought last summer, I poured a pailful of water around each plant about twice a week. That's about all I can tell you about how I grow my peonies.

CHAIRMAN:

That's fine, Mrs. Brown. Now, suppose you tell us the varieties of some of your peonies.



MRS. BROWN:

Well, this white one is Francis Willard; the second white one is Festiva Maxima; the light pink is President Taft; this dark pink one is Kelway's Queen; and the red one is Richard Garvel. These are my five varieties. Of course, you understand there are many good varieties, but I thought it best to limit my collection to five.

CHAIRMAN:

Thank you, Mrs. Brown. Now, Aunt Polly, if I'm not mistaken you brought these Radiance and Red Radiance roses.

AUNT POLLY:

Yes, those are mine. I have about ten varieties of teas and hybrid tea roses in my garden, but I want to show you my climbing roses. I have five kinds. This one is Crimson Rambler -- look at the small dazzling red flowers in great clusters. And here is Dr. Van Fleet with wonderful pink flowers. -- This one is Mermaid with large white single flowers with cream and lemon centers. -- Here is Mary Lovett with beautiful pure white flowers, -- -- and this other one is Mary Wallace with bright pink flowers that have a touch of gold. I like to try the newer roses, but most of mine are the older or well known varieties like Radiance and Killarney.

CHAIRMAN:

I think you are right there, Aunt Polly. I generally let my neighbors try out the novelties, but I stick pretty closely to the old standard sorts. I like roses that are fragrant.

FARMER BROWN:

Where I lived when I was a boy, we had a large Cherokee Rose and the old Polyantha rose. I'll confess that I am rather partial to those old-time roses, but, of course, now-a-days we want roses that are perpetual bloomers. I'll tell you some of our roses last summer were just as fine as any hot-house roses.

CHAIRMAN:

Since Mr. Brown has mentioned the matter of growing fine outdoor roses, it might be well to remind you that a great deal depends on the way you prune your roses. Most people do not prune their tea and hybrid tea roses closely enough, but leave too many buds, then as a result, the stems are short and the flowers small. If you cut your roses with long stems, and leave only about two buds on the remaining stub, you will keep down the bushy growth, and insure a new crop of good, strong stems and buds. Of course, you must feed your rose plants well, and keep them supplied with moisture during dry periods if you want them to bloom. Another important point is to control the black-spot disease which ruins the foliage.

AUNT POLLY:

I think some of us would like to hear a little discussion of how and when to prune climbing roses.



CHAIRMAN:

Well, Aunt Polly, I believe the most practical rose growers recommend pruning climbing roses at the end of the summer-blooming period. You should remove most of the older wood and allow it to be replaced by a new growth. I find that it pays to prune my climbing roses pretty heavily at the end of the blooming period, then I sometimes head back some of the shoots at intervals during the summer to make them branch. Another important point is to train your climbers and tie the shoots to supports during the summer so as to prevent their running wild.

MRS. BROWN:

What about the varieties of climbing roses that are everbloomers and those that bloom in the fall?

CHAIRMAN:

Well, Mrs. Brown, you have to use your judgment in that case. Generally speaking, you would prune more moderately than in the case of the regular climbers that bloom but once a year. You should thin out the growth and head back moderately after each blooming period, so that a supply of strong, new wood will form. In other words, the everblooming climbers are pruned about the same as tea and hybrid tea roses.

FARMER BROWN:

Should the climbing roses be given a little extra feeding during the summer?

CHAIRMAN:

Yes, especially the everbloomers. You should give them one or two waterings with liquid manure, or, you can top-dress around the plants with finely rotted manure. This will act as a mulch, and at the same time supply some plant food. In case your roses show the need of a stimulant you might add an ounce of nitrate of soda to each five gallons of liquid manure.

BETTY BROWN:

You're all so interested in your roses, but I want you to see my basket of pansies. Mother and I picked all of these this morning, and we didn't get half of the blossoms, and there'll be as many more by tomorrow morning.

CHAIRMAN:

Well Betty, those certainly are fine pansies, and did you ever notice how much the pansy blossoms look like little faces? Every one seems to have a different expression. By the way, Betty, if you leave a few of your choicest pansy flowers you can ripen pansy seed. Its lots of fun to grow plants from seed you save from your own garden. What else have you in your flower garden, Betty?

BETTY BROWN: Oh! lots of things, but I want you to look at these Lily-of-the-Valley flowers, they're so small. The flowers from mother's Lily-of-the-Valley plants are much larger - - - there must be two kinds.

CHAIRMAN:

There are several kinds, Betty one kind has striped foliage, and another has double flowers. I think that your plants and your mother's are the same kind, but that hers are in a little better soil. Perhaps your plants are too thick. How long since they were reset and divided?



BETTY BROWN:

Oh, I don't know - - - several years, I guess. And the plants are quite thick. When should they be reset and divided?

CHAIRMAN:

In the late fall or early spring. Perhaps you can just thin out the plants in the old bed, then give the bed a good coating of compost this fall. Take out whole clumps of the roots, and fill the spaces with good soil. Those that you take out can be divided and set in a new location, or you can give them to your friends.

MRS. BROWN:

I want to ask a question about narcissus bulbs. I have a bed of narcissus that have been left in the same place for about five years, and they have become quite thick and the flowers are small. Should I lift them and divide them this summer?

CHAIRMAN:

Yes, Mrs. Brown, under those circumstances, I would advise you to dig the bulbs after the tops have all died down, spread them on screens or trays, and dry them where they will be protected from rain, but get plenty of ventilation. After the bulbs are thoroughly cured you can clean and separate them, and keep them cool and dry until late summer when they should be reset about 4 inches deep in a new location. Don't forget that the soil where you set your daffodils should be well prepared and fertilized to a depth of 12 to 16 inches.

MRS. BROWN:

Should tulip bulbs be handled in the same way?

CHAIRMAN:

Yes, practically the same. You must remember that the tulip forms an entirely new bulb each year, while the daffodils increase their growth from the inside and form divisions.

BETTY BROWN:

Our Iris are perfectly wonderful this year, and such a variety of colors. These that Mother and I brought to the meeting are not as good as our earlier ones, but I think they're pretty good considering the care they've had.

AUNT POLLY:

Why Betty, I've just been admiring your Iris, they're such beautiful shades of blue and purple.

CHAIRMAN:

Now folks, you know the time to divide and move the rhizomes or roots of the iris is soon after they finish blooming. If you put off lifting and resetting them too long after they bloom, a good supply of new roots won't form by fall.

MRS. BROWN:

I have a copy of Farmers' Bulletin No. 1406 in my bulletin library that I go by whenever I transplant any of my irises. You see, there are so many different kinds of iris and each class has to be handled differently.



CHAIRMAN:

That's right, Mrs. Brown, and I find that it pays to have the information right on hand, so that I do not have to hunt for it when it is time to do something special in my garden. I have about sixty garden bulletins in my library.

MRS. BROWN:

I want you folks to take a look at my gladiolus flowers. I call them mine, because I planted them in a row in the garden so as to have plenty for cut flowers. I cut these yesterday morning just when the first flower on each spike was open, and we kept them standing in water in a cool cellar until today. Aren't they beautiful?

CHAIRMAN:

Indeed they are beautiful, Mr. Brown, some of the flowers are of almost as delicate shades as orchids. You're right about cutting the flowers when the first blossom begins to open.

BETTY BROWN:

It is too early in the season for me to show any of my prize-winning zinnias, but here are some pretty fair snapdragons.

CHAIRMAN:

I'll say they are pretty fair snapdragons - - - stems fifteen inches long. You must have started the plants in the house, Betty.

BETTY BROWN:

We did, but part of these are from plants that were wintered-over outdoors. Daddy protected them with straw, and set some boards on the north and west sides of the bed so as to break the force of the wind. You see, we had a very mild winter anyway.

CHAIRMAN:

Who brought these lovely cornflowers - bachelor buttons - some people call them?

AUNT POLLY:

Those cornflowers are from my garden, and so are the larkspurs. I'm very fond of blue flowers, and you know we have very few good blues among our flowers.

CHAIRMAN:

That's true, Aunt Polly, there are not many clear blue flowers, but I wonder how many of you have seen a whole field of Texas Blue Bonnets in full bloom. I'll tell you that's a sight. I am sorry we couldn't have had the flowers of the Lupine or Texas Blue Bonnet here in our flower show today. Then there's another beautiful blue flower that is easy to grow. I mean the Blue Meadow Sage which comes from the wilds of Colorado, and blooms during the late summer and fall.

MRS. BROWN:

I like quite a variety of blooming plants in my flower garden, so that I can have flowers all summer. I depend mainly on my roses to supply cut flowers for the table, but sometimes I have a small blooming begonia growing in a pot as a table decoration.



CHAIRMAN:

Mrs. Brown, I am glad you mentioned begonias, because I want all of you to get acquainted with the little bedding begonia known as Prima Donna. It is fine for borders and flowerbeds and makes an excellent pot plant and blooms continuously. You know, some plants bloom for a while and then take a long rest, but this little begonia with its rose-colored flowers never stops blooming if you give it reasonable care.

FARMER BROWN:

There are so many kinds of attractive flowers that it would be impossible for anyone to grow them all. I think it's better to select a few that do best on your soil and in your climate and put all of your effort on them. Sort of specialize on a few of them you know.

CHAIRMAN:

I think Mr. Brown is right, and it is better to grow a few flowers well than to attempt too many. Our little exhibit of flowers brought in by members of the Progressive Garden Club attending the meeting today shows what some of us can do, and while we can't all be great plant-breeders, we can at least be good gardeners. Now folks, our time is up and we must bring our meeting to a close.

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ANNOUNCER:

That brings to a close the meeting of the Progressive Garden Club for today. Those taking part in our program today were Mr. W. R. Beattie, as Chairman, Mr. Frank L. Teuton, as Farmer Brown, Miss Norma L. Hughes, as Mrs. Brown, Miss Patricia Beattie, as Betty Brown, and Miss Rose Glaspey as Aunt Polly.



